

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 IO-13 HA-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
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O 120751Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8359
INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
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USCINCEUR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2139

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PDIP, ASEC, DJ, ET, FR
SUBJ: SNAGS IN FRENCH KIDNAPPING CASE

REF: DJIBOUTI 0681

SUMMARY. FRENCH CHARGE IN ADDIS IS LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN
AMBASSADOR BASTOUL IN DJIBOUTI (REFTEL) CONCERNING OUT-
COME BOUCAULT CASE BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENTS LATE AFTERNOON
MAY 11. HE SEES (1) PMGSE AS DETERMINED NOT TO LET ANY
OTHER ELEMENTS, INCLUDING THEIR FRIEND AHMED DINI, GET
CREDIT FOR BOUCAULT RELEASE, (2) DINI ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT
INCIDENT FOR HIS OWN POLITICAL GOALS, AND (3) POSSIBILITY
OF ILL-EXECUTED ETHIOPIAN ATTEMPT TO LIBERATE BOUCAULT.
END SUMMARY.

1. FRENCH CHARGE PIERRE NOLET (I WOULD ASK ADDRESSEES
NOT REFER TO NOLET AS SOURCE IN DISCUSSIONS, PARTICULARLY
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WITH FRENCH), ARRIVING LATE AT MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR'S
DINNER AFTER "TWO-HOUR MEETING" WITH AHMED DINI, TOLD ME
AFFAIR IS GETTING INCREDIBLY COMPLICATED WITH ALL PARTIES
-- EXCEPT FRENCH, OF COURSE -- DETERMINED TO BARGAIN FOR
POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. DINI HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH AFAR
GROUP HOLDING BOUCAULT INSIDE ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY AND REPORTS
HE IS SAFE EXCEPT FOR BOUT WITH MALARIA. (NOLET GAVE

DINI MEDICINE FOR DELIVERY TO BOUCAULT.) NOLET CLAIMS THAT ONE CAR THAT PARTICIPATED IN KIDNAPPING -- OTHER THAN TOYOTA -- IS PRESENTLY PARKED IN FRONT OF ADDIS NILE HOTEL AND THAT IS WHERE KIDNAPPERS' CONTACTS WITH DINI ARE TAKING PLACE. (EMBASSY COMMENT: AND PERHAPS WITH PMGSE, TOO.) ALL SEEMED TO BE GOING WELL UNTIL AFTERNOON MAY 11 WHEN DINI INSERTED, AS A CONDITION FOR HIS GOOD OFFICES, FRENCH ASSISTANCE IN RETURNING HIM TO GOVT IN DJIBOUTI. NOLET SAID HE TOLD DINI THAT UNDER NO CONDITIONS WOULD FRENCH BARGAIN WITH LIFE OF ONE OF ITS CITIZENS; "THOSE DAYS ARE OVER," HE TOLD ME.

2. IN MEANTIME NOLET IS CONVINCED THAT PMGSE IS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO OUTSIDE INTERVENTION OF ANY KIND. FIRST, HE WAS TOLD AT FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT PMGSE WOULD NOT TOLERATE FRENCH COMMANDO OPERATION INSIDE ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. BUT APPARENTLY CONSTRUCTIONS APPLY TO DINI'S INTERVENTION EVEN THOUGH HE IS SUPPOSEDLY ETHIOPIA'S GOOD FRIEND. NOLET BELIEVES ETHIOPIANS DO NOT WANT TO BE BEHOLDEN TO HIM IN ANY MANNER, AN OBVIOUS CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING BOUCAULT'S RELEASE. PMAC MEMBER IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MAJOR BERHANU BAYEH APPARENTLY GAVE GO-AHEAD FOR DINI ROLE, ONLY TO BE "CONTRADICTED" SUBSEQUENTLY BY FOREIGN MINISTER COL. DR. FELEKE GEDLE-GHIORGIS. AMONG ADDIS POLITICAL ANALYSTS, IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT FELEKE COULD OVERRIDE MAJOR BERHANU; CONFIDENTIAL

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NOLET'S CONCLUSION IS THAT DIFFERENCES OF VIEW ARE ONLY APPARENT AND A MACHIAVELLIAN DESIGN TO SERVE PMGSE IMAGE OF TRYING TO BE HELPFUL TO FRENCH BUT AT SAME TIME DEMONSTRATE OVERRIDING NATIONALISTIC PRIDE. IN MEANTIME, GROD PRESIDENT GOULED IS DOING HIS USUAL NOTHING, ACCORDING TO NOLET.

3. NOLET DESCRIBED AFAR KIDNAPPERS AS YOUNG, MOSTLY TEENAGERS, WHO ARE AS DISILLUSIONED WITH ETHIOPIA AS THEY ARE WITH ISSA-DOMINATED DJIBOUTI GOVT AND OLD-TIME AFAR POLITICIANS. IF ETHIOPIANS MOUNT RAID AGAINST GROUP, AS NOLET FEARS THEY WILL CLUMSILY, GROUP WILL FIGHT TO DEATH AND PROBABLY TAKE BOUCAULT WITH THEM.

4. IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS POINT HOW EXACTLY FRENCH ARE PROCEEDING TO SECURE BOUCAULT RELEASE OTHER THAN TO LAY RESPONSIBILITY ENTIRELY ON PMGSE AND GROD FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. NOLET IS GIVEN TO WORSE CASE ANALYSIS, AND THIS EMBASSY HAS NO OTHER RELIABLE INFORMATION AT THIS TIME TO CONFIRM OR DENY IT. SINCE WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO AROUSE FURTHER PMGSE SUSPICIONS OF AMERICAN DESIGNS ON DJIBOUTI, I WOULD PREFER ONLY TO

PASS ON WHAT FRENCH PROVIDE BUT NOT GIVE ANY APPEARANCE
OF UNMERITED INTEREST.
MATHERON

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